

VZCZCXRO5016
RR RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHSA #0920/01 0731231
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 141231Z MAR 07
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8715
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2027
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 1019
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1136
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 6346
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1020
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRETORIA 000920

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/13/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [SF](#)

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA WELCOMES U.S. REENGAGEMENT WITH SADC

REF: A. STATE 10483

[B](#). 06 STATE 191811

[C](#). 06 GABORONE 1631

Classified By: Chief of Mission Eric M. Bost. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) SUMMARY: South African officials welcomed U.S. reengagement in SADC and urged support for Executive Secretary Salomao's five priority areas: economic

SIPDIS

integration, infrastructure development, disaster management, cross-cutting social sectors, and peace and security. They cautioned against overreliance on the SADC Secretariat, arguing that many key regional projects can be pursued with national governments. Think tank analysts in South Africa are generally skeptical about the SAG commitment to SADC and the organization's long-term economic value. The Department may wish to consider sending an official from the Department and/or Special Representative to SADC Canavan to Pretoria to deepen the discussions on the U.S. SADC reengagement strategy. END SUMMARY.

[2](#). (C) PolCounselor delivered Ref A message on U.S. reengagement in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) March 6 to Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Chief Director: Africa Multilateral Themba Rubushe (DAS-level) and Acting Director for SADC Howie Short. Rubushe and Short welcomed the U.S. interest in SADC and believed there were a number of areas where U.S. engagement could be helpful. They urged close cooperation with the SADC Secretariat on prioritizing U.S. involvement.

SADC Priorities As Guide

[3](#). (C) Short suggested that the five SADC critical priority areas, as outlined by SADC Executive Secretary Salomao and endorsed by the Heads of State at the 2006 Maseru Summit, should guide U.S. engagement with SADC:

-- economic integration, including, Short stressed, development and diversification of national economies;

-- infrastructure development, in areas like transport, electricity, communications, water, and tourism;

-- management of "disasters," including HIV/AIDS, food security, and natural disasters;

-- other cross-cutting sectors that "add value" to the top three priorities, such as education, health, environment, gender, and youth; and

-- peace and security (Short noted that this was not one of Salomao's priority areas, but rather was added by HOSs at the August 2006 Maseru Summit).

14. (C) Short cautioned against "overreliance" on the SADC Secretariat. Much of the SADC agenda, as described above,

SIPDIS

relies on individual member states, or partnerships between states, not on the regional organization itself. International partners need not always look to SADC to support regional goals; there is "lots of juicy stuff to do" through support for development projects in individual countries.

15. (C) Rubushe and Short also urged the United States to express support for Executive Secretary Salomao and his vision for the region, telling him, "We see what you are trying to do and we support it." Short said that Salomao is often frustrated by the lack of action among SADC member states.

Zimbabwe a "Given"

16. (C) As SADC deepens its integration, the region must work with Zimbabwe, Short said. It is a "pivot" country, as the major transport routes to the north pass through the country. Zimbabwe is not a "variable" in regional dynamics, it is a "given."

PRETORIA 00000920 002 OF 002

COMESA Versus SADC

17. (C) PolCounselor asked about how the SAG views other regional organizations, such as the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU). Rubushe observed that over time, two of the three organizations will likely die since you cannot have overlapping customs unions. When time comes, perhaps as soon as 2010 (the goal for instituting a SADC Customs Union), countries will have to make a decision whether COMESA or SADC better serves their interests. COMESA is blessed with a strong Executive Secretary and a much larger economic market than SADC, but has not addressed the peace and security issues like SADC and does not have the same political weight. The economic integration in SACU is "shallow," Rubushe said, but works because of the practical benefit of funds being returned to member states.

Regional Peace and Security

18. (C) PolCounselor also expressed U.S. interest in supporting regional peace and security initiatives, but noted that U.S. policy and legislative restrictions on Zimbabwe limit the U.S. ability to engage in this area. Rubushe and Short expressed an openness to discuss peace and security cooperation in more detail with U.S. officials, although they noted that the South African Department of Defense is the lead agency on these issues. Short reiterated President Mbeki's comment that southern Africa does not face any immediate security crises, and thus can "take its time" in developing an effective regional peacekeeping brigade and other peace structures. He said that SADC has already done much valuable work in areas like doctrine, logistics, planning, and compatibility, which is not always appreciated

by international partners.

Think Tank Perspective

¶9. (C) Prominent think tank analysts in South Africa have expressed skepticism about the long-term prospects for SADC as an engine of regional integration and growth. Jakkie Cilliers, Executive Director of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), questioned whether South Africa is serious about regional integration. The SAG expresses rhetorical support for SADC, but has been unwilling to cede any sovereignty to SADC. Cilliers noted that the southern African region has been the slowest to develop a strong regional organization, perhaps because southern African countries were last to gain their independence and thus are reticent to cede sovereignty.

¶10. (C) Moeletsi Mbeki, prominent businessman, brother of President Mbeki, and Deputy Chairperson of the South African Institute for International Affairs (SAIIA), suggested that the future of economic integration lies with COMESA, not SADC. SADC integration does not offer any significant economic benefits to South African businesses, unlike COMESA which reaches through the major markets of Kenya, Ethiopia and Egypt. Mbeki noted that SADC was created in reaction to the destabilization threat from apartheid. Since South Africa's democratic transition in 1994, the organization may be irrelevant and anachronistic.

Comment

¶11. (C) Support for SADC's development and regional integration remains one of South Africa's foreign policy priorities. The SAG officials appreciated our approach to them on SADC issues, and we encourage continued dialogue. The Department may wish to consider sending an official from the Department and/or Special Representative to SADC Canavan, to Pretoria to deepen the discussions on the U.S. SADC reengagement strategy.
BOST